# AC

Advantage 1 is the World Trade Organization

The WTO is using its trade authority to challenge environmental protection and prioritize resource extraction.

**Global Exchange 11** writes[[1]](#footnote-1)

5. The WTO Is Destroying the Environment **The WTO is being used by corporations to dismantle** hard-won local and national **environmental protections, which are attacked as “barriers to trade.”** The very first WTO panel ruled that a provision of the US Clean Air Act, requiring both domestic and foreign producers alike to produce cleaner gasoline, was illegal. The WTO declared illegal a provision of the Endangered Species Act that requires shrimp sold in the US to be caught with an inexpensive device allowing endangered sea turtles to escape. **The WTO is attempting to deregulate industries including logging, fishing, water** utilities**, and energy distribution, which will lead to further exploitation of** these **natural resources.**

The Precautionary Principle challenges WTO authority over environmental issues. This is key to generating momentum to shut down the WTO.

**Mokhiber and Weissman 99** write[[2]](#footnote-2)

**The WTO eviscerates the Precautionary Principle**. **WTO rules** generally **block countries from acting in response to potential risk** -- requiring a probability before governments can move to resolve harms to human health or the environment. The WTO squashes diversity. WTO rules establish international health, environmental and other standards as a global ceiling through a process of "harmonization;" countries or even states and cities can only exceed them by overcoming high hurdles. The WTO operates in secrecy. Its tribunals rule on the "legality" of nations' laws, but carry out their work behind closed doors. **The WTO limits governments' ability to use their purchasing dollar for** human rights, **environmental**, worker rights and other non-commercial **purposes**. In general, **WTO rules state that governments can make purchases based only on quality and cost** considerations. The WTO disallows bans on imports of goods made with child labor. In general, WTO rules do not allow countries to treat products differently based on how they were produced -- irrespective of whether made with brutalized child labor, with workers exposed to toxics or with no regard for species protection. The WTO legitimizes life patents. WTO rules permit and in some cases require patents or similar exclusive protections for life forms. Some of these problems, such as the WTO's penchant for secrecy, could potentially be fixed, but the core problems -- **prioritization of commercial** over other **values**, the constraints on democratic decision-making **and** the **bias against local economies** -- cannot, for they **are inherent in the WTO itself. Because of these** unfixable **problems, the W**orld **T**rade **O**rganization **should be shut down**, sooner rather than later. That doesn't mean interim steps shouldn't be taken. It does mean that **beneficial reforms will** focus not on adding new areas of competence to the WTO or enhancing its authority, even if the new areas appear desirable (such as labor rights or competition). Instead, the reforms to pursue are those that reduce or **limit the WTO's power -- for example, by denying it** the **authority to invalidate laws passed pursuant to international environmental agreements**, limiting application of WTO agricultural rules in the Third World, or eliminating certain subject matters (such as essential medicines or life forms) from coverage under the WTO's intellectual property agreement. **These measures** are necessary and desirable in their own right, and they **would help generate momentum to close down the WTO.**

The PP conflicts with WTO trade agreements. Full reconciliation is impossible.

**Borjeson 7** writes[[3]](#footnote-3)

**The P**recautionary **P**rinciple **is one of the most important** and well-known **environmental policies governing trade**, both nationally and internationally. The scope of this study will however be limited to the definition presented in Sandin 1999, where the author has identified four common elements of the principle from a number of definitions: “if there is a threat, which is uncertain, then some kind of action is mandatory” (Sandin 1999 quoted in Sandin et al 2002: 290). Or in other words: “on some occasions, measures against a possible hazard Principlerelated variables Outcome of GMO-dispute Process of GMO-dispute Politicallyand economically related variables Case-related variables Aims and actions of the WTO Aims and actions based on the Precautionary Principle 15 should be taken even if the available evidence is not enough to conclude the existence of the hazard as a scientific fact” (Sandin et al 2002: 288). Note however that an evaluation of the Precautionary Principle will not be done as such, seeing as the case-study is too limited in scope for this purpose and will therefore mainly be descriptive. The principle will be explored more thoroughly in section 4.5 Key Provisions of the Precautionary Principle. The WTO agreements on trade include a number of multilateral agreements aimed at liberalizing international trade and certainly not all of them are referred to within this study. More precisely, the principle governing the de-regulated trade is one of the principles stated in the preamble of the agreements establishing the world trade organization. Namely: “entering into reciprocal and mutually advantageous arrangements directed to the substantial reduction of tariffs and other barriers to trade and to the elimination of discriminatory treatment in international trade relations (…), to develop an integrated, more viable and durable multilateral trading system”. In relation to the Precautionary Principle, the **WTO agreements state that** the right to take **precaution**ary measures **is only approved if** they are **not applied in a manner which would** result in “arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries, or a disguised **restrict**ion on international **trade**” (www.wto.org). Hence when the term WTO agreements on trade is used these are “the principles” being referred to. A more detailed exposition of the agreements will be given in the section 4.3 Key provisions on the WTO agreements on trade. Since this study concerns one case, this together with the purposive limitation of material makes the results less useful when generalizing and applying the findings of this study to a larger context and since this is a qualitative study the findings could be subject to other interpretations (Creswell 1994: 111). However, it makes a contribution to the ongoing debate on the concerned matter as the case-study has a high representativity when discussing the matter of subject. Although Rational Choice theory is used to explain causality, a complete causal approach will not be used. Since the study only handles one case and only one set of variables (the principle-related) a qualitative evaluation of the influence on the outcome by the independent variables concerned: the Precautionary Principle and the WTO agreements on trade will be done instead. Moreover, since the study is limited to one case it will not be possible to test the regularity of the variables. What it can however, is to study the presumable correlation in a case where the two conflicting principles are involved. The second phrase in research question nr 2: How were the two principles balanced in the outcome and why, might however be too difficult to fully answer with this limited approach. 16 Practical limitations An important methodological aspect of any scientific study concerns its validity and if the chosen indicators correspond to the chosen theoretical concepts (Yin 2003: 34). A validity fault could follow the purposive limitation of the factors being studied; in the concerned case this could be the result of focus being on the principle-related variables and not on all of the factors influencing the process and outcome. This limitation might result in the study not covering the conflict in its whole and leads to the question: will the study measure what it intends to measure, even when being limited to the chosen variables? The occurring regularity of the two principles in the process of the dispute together with legislative measures being based upon them indicates validity throughout the study. Moreover, the long process surrounding the conflict implies that this study focuses on a central and relevant issue. Another methodological aspect concerns the reliability of the study and the handling of the material used (Yin 2003: 38). One way to get around this uncertainty is by external reliability verification: to have another person read the material used and then to compare the results to see if these concur. This has however not been done in this study and consequently there is really no way getting around this problem. What has been done however, is internal reliability verification where the material has been read several times in order to be as sure as possible of what was actually said and concluded. A practical limitation of this study is time. Another is cost. The limited time-frame has put restrictions both on the research objective and the material used; interviews could for example have been a fruitful complement to the documents. Another practical limitation concerns the documents used. The case-study does not provide an examination of the submissions made by all complaining parties. This clearly puts limitations to both the study and its findings, but it has nonetheless been necessary to put a limit to the sources used. The documents used in the case-study are 1) the First Written Submission by the United States, 2) the First Written Submission by the European Communities and 3) the final Reports of the Dispute Settlement Panel. The reason for only looking at the US Submission and not the submissions of all the complaining parties in more detail is, again, the limited timeframe. Nevertheless, the material chosen is enough to illustrate the principle-related conflict. Finally, the issue being covered is in many ways a legal issue. I am however not a legal expert and the study will not be conducted within the realm of science of international law. Last there is the issue of my own personal bias and limits as a researcher, as has so clearly been pointed out: “the ethnographer enters the field with an open mind, not an empty head” 17 (Fetterman 1989 as quoted in Creswell 1994: 44). I might overlook certain issues and be limited in my knowledge of others. Hopefully those weaknesses will be overcome by the study being exposed to peer-review along with help from my supervisor. 2.4 Earlier research This study will be done in the context of environmental social science. It has been acknowledged that social sciences play an important part in environmental science and that it is of importance that they participate and are incorporated in research on sustainable development (www.formas.se). Sustainable development is however a very broad focus area and there really is no point in giving a thorough exposition on all of the previous research concerning it. So, the research focused on in this section mainly concerns the conflict between the trade related and environmentally protecting regimes and the incompatibility between them and the principles concerned. Furthermore, it touches the subject of how the Precautionary Principle stands in conflict with matters of trade. The earlier research consists of relevant articles on the matter, mostly articles within the realm of law and international agreements. The media of articles are chosen since they often are the bearers of the most recent information and new findings on a certain subject matter within a research area. They are also the easiest to find and duplicate (Creswell 1994: 28). There is no lack of writings on the conflict between environmental international regimes and agreements concerned with the matter of trade and the topic is clearly being discussed on the international arena (Schoenbaum 2000: 866). The **two regimes** principally **regulating** the international **trade with g**enetically **m**odified **o**rganism**s are the Cartagena Protocol** on Biosafety **and** the **W**orld **T**rade **O**rganization **Agreements** on trade. Previous studies have begun mapping where the regimes are in in-coherence with each other and the reasons to why one prevails over the other when faced in matters of dispute. When addressing the potential conflict between the two principles: **the P**recautionary **P**rinciple **and** the **WTO agreements** on trade, it has been found that also these two **contradict**. It has been proposed that while under the current WTO agreements and with the current definitions of the Precautionary Principle, **no full reconciliation** of the Precautionary Principle and trade liberalisation **is possible** (Matthee and Vermersch 2000: 69). Earlier studies have also concluded that one of the key issues in this debate is the extent to which the Precautionary Principle should be applied. It has been shown that **the Biosafety Protocol and** agreements under the umbrella of the **WTO agreements** on trade **contradict** each other on this 18 point **and** that **this will lead to future conflicts** (Schoenbaum 2000: 866). Trade- and environmental agreements aspire to be mutually supportive, but achieving this requires substantial harmonisation between the two. It has been found that each of the agreements treats the Precautionary Principle differently and the idea has been presented that there is a great risk that parties in trade disputes in GMOs will use either agreement depending on each party’s status in each agreement (http://ideas.repec.org). The area of research is only in its beginning and we are still to discover what the outcome of the GMO-case is going to have in practice. As stated earlier in the text, the outcome on the matter by the WTO Dispute Panel might very well come to have far reaching implications for the global governance of GMOs, possibilities for environmental protection and for international trade relations. To conclude: it has been found that there is an incoherence between the regimes governing environmental protection and international trade and that this incoherence applies to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the WTO agreements on trade. The two internationally recognized principals: the Precautionary Principle and the WTO agreements are found to be in conflict and it has been proposed that no reconciliation between them in their current form is possible. It is further emphasized that there is a need to address this issue because the contradiction on how to use the Precautionary Principle will lead to further conflicts and this will undoubtedly result in obstacles on the road to sustainable development. Here is where the importance of this study comes into the picture. If we are to achieve a sustainable development within the realm of trade there is a need to continue the research on the incoherence between the regimes and concerned principles and what implications this incoherence might have. Furthermore, there is a need to discuss this conflict and what difficulties the outcome of the conflict imposes on the handling of environmental problems through policy making. There is also a need to further observe how the disagreement on how the Precautionary Principle should be applied displays in actual conflicts, as in the case presented within this study, the GMO related trade conflict between the EC and the US, Canada and Argentina. To further point on the significance of this study and its relevance, it has in recent strategies for Swedish socio-environmental research been stated that the research objectives concerning division of power and goal conflicts are of high importance for socioenvironmental research. **Questions like who has** the **actual power in environmental politics** and how are goal conflicts displayed and manifested on national and international level **are** seen as at **the core** of the **issue** (www.formas.se) and these questions will to some extent be discussed within this study.

WTO trade agreements enable rich countries to manipulate developing countries.

**Walker 11** writes[[4]](#footnote-4)

But the WTO membership has failed to deliver the promised pro-development changes. Finding "development" in the Doha Development Round today is like looking for a needle in a haystack. **Developing countries have been completely sidelined** by the economic and political interests of global powers. Here are 10 examples of how the WTO has failed the poor: 1. Cotton: the Fairtrade Foundation revealed last year how the $47bn in subsidies paid to rich-country producers in the past 10 years has created barriers for the 15 million cotton farmers across west Africa trying to trade their way out of poverty, and how 5 million of the world's poorest farming families have been forced out of business and into deeper poverty because of those subsidies. 2. Agricultural subsidies: beyond cotton, WTO members have failed even to agree how to reduce the huge subsidies paid to rich world farmers, whose overproduction continues to threaten the livelihoods of developing world farmers. 3. Trade agreements: the **WTO** has also failed to clarify the deliberately ambiguous rules on concluding **trade agreements** that **allow the poorest countries to be manipulated by** the **rich states. In Africa, in negotiations with the EU, countries have been forced to eliminate tariffs on** up to **90% of their trade because no clear rules exist to protect them**. 4. Special treatment: the rules for developing countries, called "special and differential treatment" rules, were meant to be reviewed to make them more precise, effective and operational. But the WTO has failed to work through the 88 proposals that would fill the legal vacuum. 5. Medicine: the poorest in developing countries are unable to access affordable medicine because members have failed to clarify ambiguities between the need for governments to protect public health on one hand and on the other to protect the intellectual property rights of pharmaceutical companies. 6. Legal costs: the WTO pledged to improve access to its expensive and complex legal system, but has failed. In 15 years of dispute settlement under the WTO, 400 cases have been initiated. No African country has acted as a complainant and only one least developed country has ever filed a claim. 7. Protectionist economic policies: one of the WTO's five core functions agreed at its inception in 1995 was to achieve more coherence in global economic policy-making. Yet the WTO failed to curb the speedy increase in the number of protectionist measures applied by G20 countries in response to the global economic crisis over the past two years – despite G20 leaders' repeated affirmations of their "unwavering" commitment to resist all forms of protectionist measures. 8. Natural disaster: the WTO fails to alleviate suffering when it has the opportunity to do so. In the case of natural disaster, the membership will have taken almost two years to agree and implement temporary trade concessions for Pakistan, where severe flooding displaced 20 million people in 2010 and caused $10bn of damage. Those measures, according to the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, would have boosted Pakistan's exports to the EU by at least €100m this year. 9. Decision-making: **the WTO makes most** of its **decisions by consensus** – and achieving consensus between 153 countries is nearly impossible. **But** this shows another failure of the WTO: to break the link between market size and political weight that would give small and poor countries a voice in the trade negotiations. 10. Fair trade: 10 years after the start of the Doha Development Round, governments have failed to make trade fair. As long as **small and poor countries remain without a voice**, the role of campaigning organisations, such as Traidcraft and Fairtrade Foundation, which are working together to eliminate cotton subsidies, will remain critical. The WTO has failed to live up to its promises over the past decade, which reveals a wider systemic problem in the global community. True and lasting solutions to global economic problems can only come when the model of global competitiveness between countries becomes one of genuine cooperation.

WTO manipulation of developing countries causes disease, hunger, and income inequality.

**Global Exchange 11** writes[[5]](#footnote-5)

6. The WTO is Killing People The WTO’s fierce defense of ‘Trade Related Intellectual Property’ rights (TRIPs)—patents, copyrights and trademarks—comes at the expense of health and human lives. **The WTO has protected** for **pharmaceutical companies’ ‘right to profit’ against governments** seeking to protect their people’s health by **providing lifesaving medicines in** countries in areas like sub-saharan **Africa, where thousands die** every day **from** HIV/**AIDS**. Developing countries won an important victory in 2001 when they affirmed the right to produce generic drugs (or import them if they lacked production capacity), so that they could provide essential lifesaving medicines to their populations less expensively. Unfortunately, in September 2003, many new conditions were agreed to that will make it more difficult for countries to produce those drugs. Once again, the WTO demonstrates that it favors corporate profit over saving human lives. 7. **The WTO is Increasing Inequality** Free trade is not working for the majority of the world. During the most recent period of rapid growth in global trade and investment (1960 to 1998) inequality worsened both internationally and within countries. The UN Development Program reports that the richest 20 percent of the world’s population consume 86 percent of the world’s resources while the poorest 80 percent consume just 14 percent. WTO rules have hastened these trends **by opening up countries to foreign investment and thereby making it easier** for production **to go where the labor is cheapest** and most easily exploited and environmental costs are low. 8. The WTO is Increasing Hunger Farmers produce enough food in the world to feed everyone – yet because of corporate control of food distribution, as many as 800 million people worldwide suffer from chronic malnutrition. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, food is a human right. **In developing countries,** as many as **four out of** every **five** people **make their living from the land. But** the leading principle in the WTO’s Agreement on Agriculture is that market forces should control agricultural policies-rather than a national commitment to guarantee food security and maintain decent family farmer incomes. **WTO policies have allowed** dumping of **heavily subsidized industrial**ly produced **food into poor countries, undermining local production and increasing hunger.** 9. The WTO Hurts Poor, Small Countries in Favor of Rich Powerful Nations The WTO supposedly operates on a consensus basis, with equal decision-making power for all. In reality, many important decisions get made in a process whereby poor countries’ negotiators are not even invited to closed door meetings – and then ‘agreements’ are announced that poor countries didn’t even know were being discussed. Many countries do not even have enough trade personnel to participate in all the negotiations or to even have a permanent representative at the WTO. This severely disadvantages poor countries from representing their interests. Likewise, **many countries are too poor to defend themselves** from WTO challenges **from the rich countries**, and change their laws rather than pay for their own defense. 10. The WTO Undermines Local Level Decision-Making and National Sovereignty The WTO’s “most favored nation” provision requires all WTO member countries to treat each other equally and to treat all corporations from these countries equally regardless of their track record. Local policies aimed at rewarding companies who hire local residents, use domestic materials, or adopt environmentally sound practices are essentially illegal under the WTO. **Developing countries are prohibited from creating local laws** that developed countries once pursued, such as **protecting** new, **domestic industries until they can be internationally competitive**. California Governor Gray Davis vetoed a “Buy California” bill that would have granted a small preference to local businesses because it was WTO-illegal. Conforming with the WTO required entire sections of US laws to be rewritten. Many countries are even changing their laws and constitutions in anticipation of potential future WTO rulings and negotiations. 11. There are Alternatives to the WTO Citizen organizations have developed alternatives to the corporate-dominated system of international economic governance. Together we can build the political space that nurtures a democratic global economy that promotes jobs, ensures that every person is guaranteed their human rights to food, water, education, and health care, promotes freedom and security, and preserves our shared environment for future generations. 12. The Tide is Turning Against Free Trade and the WTO! **International opposition to the WTO is growing**. Massive protests in Seattle of 1999 brought over 50,000 people together to oppose the WTO—and succeeded in shutting the meeting down. When the WTO met in 2001, the Trade negotiators were unable meet their goals of expanding the WTO’s reach. **In** Cancún, **Mexico and** Hong Kong, **China, the WTO met** thousands of **activists in protest**, scoring a major victory for democracy. **Developing countries refused to give in to** the rich countries’ agenda of **WTO expansion - and caused the talks to collapse!**

The WTO uses its trade authority to push for water privatization. This risks water wars and causes shortages which already kill millions in Africa.

**Holland 5** writes[[6]](#footnote-6)

Water is viewed as one of the last "profit centers" by the international financial institutions and trade can impact whether it becomes a commodity or stays in public hands -- **90 percent of the world's water** supplies **remain in the public trust**. Most notably water's on the table with the privatization of municipal water systems being aggressively pushed under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), a wide-ranging treaty that covers a host of services, both public and private. Vandana Shiva, the scientist and global justice activist, argued this week that "we need to recognize that **90 percent of humanity lives on water as commons** today." She lambasted a recent World Bank report urging poor countries to privatize their water systems, saying, "It actually talks about one major threat to water markets being community rights to water, and says these must be dismantled. As if there's something wrong with the commons, as if it's a primitive stage of human existence." According to the United Nations, 1.3 billion people in the world lack access to clean water and worldwide demand is doubling every 20 years -- twice the rate of population growth. **By** the year **2025, demand for** fresh **water is expected to outstrip global supply by 56 percent**. The issue gets scant attention, but analysts say that while the advanced nations are likely to wean themselves of their addiction to oil, **water is the finite resource that will drive this century's wars** just as fossil fuels did the last century's. Maude Barlowe is the Director of the Council of Canadians, an NGO deep in the fight. She told me the **water privatizers** are driven not only by profit, but also by a deeper ideology. "There are those of us who believe that water is a public good and should be protected in legislation at all levels as something that must be kept out of the market system. And there are those who've gone to the other side, and that would **include** the World Bank, the regional development banks, the International Monetary Fund, **the WTO and most** of the **big first world countries**. And they say that the only way to avoid the global shortage of water that's already here for some places but coming for the whole world is to privatize water, commodify it, put it on the open market for sale to the highest bidder and have it guided by the same rules that govern the trade in running shoes." Pushing the agenda here in Hong Kong are a small number of multinationals that dominate the growing water market. Two French titans, Vivendi Universal and Suez, dominate the group. According to a report by the Canadian NGO Polaris Institute in conjunction with Barlowe's Council of Canadians, the two -- often called the General Motors and Ford of the global water industry -- control over 70 percent of the existing world market in water services. RWE, a German electricity and waste management company, may soon challenge their market share. After purchasing two key water companies, RWE has positioned itself to expand. The U.S. construction giant Bechtel, now notorious for its no-bid reconstruction contracts in Iraq, is also a growing player. **Under the GATS treaty** being **pushed in Hong Kong, any government in the WTO** would be required to give foreign investors like these mammoth water corporations equal treatment with domestic investors like local government-owned utilities. Governments **would have to prove that** any **legislation** or regulation **related to public water** service **is** "necessary" and **"the least trade restrictive** of all possible measures**."** According to the NGOs, "in effect, **government regulations requiring high water quality** standards for safety, accessible rates for poor communities, or specific improvements in pipe infrastructure **could be declared "unnecessary"** by a WTO tribunal." **Through the WTO's "coherence agreement" with the World Bank and I**nternational **M**onetary **F**und**,** the **water behemoths get** an additional wedge: they're able to secure **loans** and grants **to finance** much of their **operations in the developing world**. These **institutions use water privatization as a "conditionality" for development aid**. A 2000 review of IMF loans in 40 countries found that 12 had loan conditions requiring some form of water privatization. The NGOs point out that "in general, it is African countries -- the smallest, poorest, and most debt ridden countries -- that experience these conditions. Tragically, **more than five million** people **die each year in Africa from poor water access**." The big water corporations are active supporters of networks of water policy think tanks and "lobby groups that prime the pump for privatization." The network includes the Global Water Partnership, the World Water Council and the World Commission on Water. All three have working relationships with international finance institutions, the major corporate players in the water industry and the governments of the big service economies.

Water wars go nuclear. **Weiner 90**[[7]](#footnote-7)

If we do not destroy ourselves with the A-bomb and the H-bomb, then we may destroy ourselves with the C-bomb, the Change Bomb. And **in a world as interlinked as ours, one explosion may lead to the other. Already in the Middle East,** from North Africa to the Persian Gulf and from the Nile to the Euphrates, **tensions over dwindling water supplies and rising populations are reaching** what many experts describe as **a flashpoint. A climate shift** in that single battle-scarred nexus **might trigger international tensions that will unleash some of the 60,000 nuclear warheads** the world has stockpiled since Trinity.

## Advocacy

Thus the **advocacy**: Developing countries should accept the Precautionary Principle on resource extraction issues. I reserve the right to clarify, so no theory violations until he checks in cross-ex.

## Extinction First

Ignore permissibility and presumption because moral uncertainty means we’ll always have a non-zero credence in the existence of morality, so there’s always a risk of offense in favor of one action.

Existential risk outweighs every other impact by orders of magnitude because of the lost potential for future generations. **Bostrom 11**[[8]](#footnote-8)

Even if we use **the most conservative** of these **estimates,** which entirely ignores the possibility of space colonization and software minds, we **find that the expected loss of an existential catastrophe is greater than** the value of **1018 human lives.  This implies that** the expected value of **reducing existential risk by a mere one millionth of one percentage point is at least ten times the value of a billion human lives.**  The more technologically comprehensive estimate of 1054 human-brain-emulation subjective life-years (or 1052 lives of ordinary length) makes the same point even more starkly.  Even if we give this allegedly lower bound on the cumulative output potential of a technologically mature civilization a mere 1% chance of being correct, we find that the expected value of reducing existential risk by a mere one billionth of one billionth of one percentage point is worth a hundred billion times as much as a billion human lives.

Moral uncertainty is high now, but there’s room for improvement. **Parfit 84** writes[[9]](#footnote-9)

Some people believe that there cannot be progress in Ethics, since everything has been already said. Like Rawls and Nagel, I believe the opposite. How many people have made Non-Religious Ethics their life's work? Before the recent past, very few. In most civilizations, **most people have believed in** the existence of a **God**, or of several gods. A large minority were in fact Atheists, whatever they pretended. But, **before the recent past, very few Atheists made Ethics their life’s work.** Buddha may be among this few, as may Confucius, and a few Ancient Greeks and Romans. After more than a thousand years, there were a few more between the Sixteenth and Twentieth centuries. Hume was an atheist who made Ethics part of his life's work. Sidgwick was another. **After Sidgwick,** there were several **atheists** who were professional moral philosophers. But most of these **did not do Ethics. They did Meta-Ethics.** They did not ask which outcomes would be good or bad, or which acts would be right or wrong. They asked, and wrote about, only the meaning of moral language, and the question of objectivity. **Non-Religious Ethics has been systematically studied**, by many people, **only since the** 19**60s. Compared with the other sciences**, Non-Religious **Ethics is** the youngest and **the least advanced.**

Adopt a parliamentary model to account for moral uncertainty. This entails minimizing existential risks. **Bostrom 9** writes[[10]](#footnote-10)

It seems people are overconfident about their moral beliefs.  But **how should one** reason and **act if one** acknowledges that one **is uncertain about morality** – not just applied ethics but fundamental moral issues? if you don't know which moral theory is correct?

It doesn't seem **you can[’t] simply plug your uncertainty into expected utility** decision theory and crank the wheel; **because many** moral **theories** state that you **should not** always **maximize** expected **utility.**

Even if we limit consideration to consequentialist theories, it still is hard to see how to combine them in the standard decision theoretic framework.  For example, suppose you give X% probability to total utilitarianism and (100-X)% to average utilitarianism.  Now an action might add 5 utils to total happiness and decrease average happiness by 2 utils.  (This could happen, e.g. if you create a new happy person that is less happy than the people who already existed.)  Now what do you do, for different values of X?

The problem gets even more complicated if we consider not only consequentialist theories but also deontological theories, contractarian theories, virtue ethics, etc.  We might even throw various meta-ethical theories into the stew: error theory, relativism, etc.

I'm working on a paper on this together with my colleague Toby Ord.  We have some arguments against a few possible "solutions" that we think don't work.  On the positive side we have some tricks that work for a few special cases.  But beyond that, the best **we have managed** so far is **a** kind of **metaphor, which** we don't think is literally and exactly correct, and it is a bit under-determined, but it **seems to get things roughly right** and it might point in the right direction:

**The Parliamentary Model.**  Suppose that you have a set of mutually exclusive moral theories, and that you assign each of these some probability.  Now imagine that **each** of these **theorie**s **gets to send** some number of **delegates to The Parliament**.  The number of delegates each theory gets to send is **proportional to the probability of the theory.**  Then the delegates bargain with one another for support on various issues; and the Parliament reaches a decision by the delegates voting.  What you should do is act according to the decisions of this imaginary Parliament.  (Actually, we use an extra trick here: we imagine that the delegates act as if the Parliament's decision were a stochastic variable such that the probability of the Parliament taking action A is proportional to the fraction of votes for A.  This has the effect of eliminating the artificial 50% threshold that otherwise gives a majority bloc absolute power.  Yet – unbeknownst to the delegates – the Parliament always takes whatever action got the most votes: this way we avoid paying the cost of the randomization!)

The idea here is that moral theories get more influence the more probable they are; yet **even a** relatively **weak theory can still get its way on some issues** that the theory think are extremely important **by sacrificing** its influence **on other** i**s**sues that other theories deem more important.  For example, **suppose you assign 10% probability to** total **util**itarianism and 90% to moral egoism (just to illustrate the principle).  Then **the Parliament** would mostly take actions that maximize egoistic satisfaction; however it **would make some concessions to util**itarianism **on** issues that utilitarianism thinks is especially important.  In this example, the person might donate some portion of their income to **existential risks** research and otherwise live completely selfishly.

I think there might be wisdom in **this model**.  It **avoids the** dangerous and **unstable extremism** that would result **from letting one’s current favorite moral theory completely dictate action**, while still allowing the aggressive pursuit of some non-commonsensical high-leverage strategies so long as they don’t infringe too much on what other major moral theories deem centrally important.

I don’t need to win that weighing values is possible. Extinction precludes all values, so it is wrong under any moral code. **Seeley 86**[[11]](#footnote-11)

In moral reasoning prediction of consequences is nearly always impossible. One balances the risks of an action against its benefits; one also considers what known damage the action would do. Thus a surgeon in deciding whether to perform an operation weighs the known effects (the loss of some nerve function, for example) and risks (death) against the benefits, and weighs also the risks and benefits of not performing surgery. Morally, however, **human extinction is unlike any other risk. No conceivable human good could be worth** the **extinction** of the race, **for** in order **to be a human good it must be experienced by human beings.** Thus extinction is one result we dare not-may not-risk. Though not conclusively established, **the risk of extinction is real enough to make nuclear war** utterly **impermissible under any** sane **moral code.**

## Framework

The standard is **maximizing happiness**.

First, revisionary intuitionism is true and leads to util.

**Yudkowsky 8** writes[[12]](#footnote-12)

I haven't said much about metaethics - the nature of morality - because that has a forward dependency on a discussion of the Mind Projection Fallacy that I haven't gotten to yet. I used to be very confused about metaethics. After my confusion finally cleared up, I did a postmortem on my previous thoughts. I found that my object-level moral reasoning had been valuable and my **meta-level moral reasoning had been worse than useless.** And this appears to be a general syndrome - **people do much better when discussing whether torture is** good or **bad than when they discuss the meaning of "good" and "bad". Thus, I deem it prudent to keep moral discussions on the object level** wherever I possibly can. Occasionally **people object** to any discussion of morality on the grounds **that morality doesn't exist**, and in lieu of jumping over the forward dependency to explain that **"exist" is not the right term to use** here, I generally say, "But **what do you do anyway?**" and **take the discussion back down to the object level.** Paul Gowder, though, has pointed out that both the idea of choosing a googolplex dust specks in a googolplex eyes over 50 years of torture for one person, and the idea of "utilitarianism", depend on "intuition". He says I've argued that the two are not compatible, but charges me with failing to argue for the utilitarian intuitions that I appeal to. Now "intuition" is not how I would describe the computations that underlie human morality and distinguish us, as moralists, from an ideal philosopher of perfect emptiness and/or a rock. But I am okay with using the word "intuition" as a term of art, bearing in mind that "intuition" in this sense is not to be contrasted to reason, but is, rather, the cognitive building block out of which both long verbal arguments and fast perceptual arguments are constructed. **I see** the project of **morality as a project of renormalizing intuition.** We have intuitions about things that seem desirable or undesirable, intuitions about actions that are right or wrong, intuitions about how to resolve conflicting intuitions, intuitions about how to systematize specific intuitions into general principles. **Delete all** the **intuitions, and** you aren't left with an ideal philosopher of perfect emptiness, **you're left with a rock. Keep all your** specific **intuitions and** refuse to build upon the reflective ones, and you aren't left with an ideal philosopher of perfect spontaneity and genuineness, **you're left with a** grunting **caveperson** running in circles, due to cyclical preferences and similar inconsistencies. "Intuition", as a term of art, is not a curse word when it comes to morality - there is nothing else to argue from. **Even modus ponens is an "intuition"** in this sense - **it**'s **just** that modus ponens **still seems like a good idea after being** formalized, **reflected on**, extrapolated out to see if it has sensible consequences, etcetera. So that is "intuition". However, Gowder did not say what he meant by "utilitarianism". Does utilitarianism say... That right actions are strictly determined by good consequences? That praiseworthy actions depend on justifiable expectations of good consequences? That probabilities of consequences should normatively be discounted by their probability, so that a 50% probability of something bad should weigh exactly half as much in our tradeoffs? That virtuous actions always correspond to maximizing expected utility under some utility function? That two harmful events are worse than one? That two independent occurrences of a harm (not to the same person, not interacting with each other) are exactly twice as bad as one? That for any two harms A and B, with A much worse than B, there exists some tiny probability such that gambling on this probability of A is preferable to a certainty of B? If you say that I advocate something, or that my argument depends on something, and that it is wrong, do please specify what this thingy is... anyway, I accept 3, 5, 6, and 7, but not 4; I am not sure about the phrasing of 1; and 2 is true, I guess, but phrased in a rather solipsistic and selfish fashion: you should not worry about being praiseworthy. Now, what are the "intuitions" upon which my "utilitarianism" depends? This is a deepish sort of topic, but I'll take a quick stab at it. First of all, it's not just that someone presented me with a list of statements like those above, and I decided which ones sounded "intuitive". Among other things, **if you try to violate** "**util**itarianism", **you run into paradoxes, contradictions**, circular preferences, **and other** things that aren't **symptoms of** moral wrongness so much as **moral incoherence.** After you think about moral problems for a while, and also find new truths about the world, and even discover disturbing facts about how you yourself work, you often end up with different moral opinions than when you started out. This does not quite define moral progress, but it is how we experience moral progress. As part of my experienced moral progress, I've drawn a conceptual separation between questions of type Where should we go? and questions of type How should we get there? (Could that be what Gowder means by saying I'm "utilitarian"?) The question of where a road goes - where it leads - you can answer by traveling the road and finding out. If you have a false belief about where the road leads, this falsity can be destroyed by the truth in a very direct and straightforward manner. When it comes to wanting to go to a particular place, this want is not entirely immune from the destructive powers of truth. You could go there and find that you regret it afterward (which does not define moral error, but is how we experience moral error). But, even so, wanting to be in a particular place seems worth distinguishing from wanting to take a particular road to a particular place. Our intuitions about where to go are arguable enough, but our intuitions about how to get there are frankly messed up. **After** the two hundred and eighty-seventh **research** study **showing that people will chop their own feet off if you frame the problem the wrong way, you start to distrust first impressions. When you've read enough research on scope insensitivity** - people will pay only 28% more to protect all 57 wilderness areas in Ontario than one area, **people will pay the same amount to save 50,000 lives as 5,000 lives**... that sort of thing... Well, the worst case of scope insensitivity I've ever heard of was described here by Slovic: Other recent research shows similar results. Two Israeli psychologists asked people to contribute to a costly life-saving treatment. They could offer that contribution to a group of eight sick children, or to an individual child selected from the group. The target amount needed to save the child (or children) was the same in both cases. Contributions to individual group members far outweighed the contributions to the entire group. There's other research along similar lines, but I'm just presenting one example, 'cause, y'know, eight examples would probably have less impact. If you know the general experimental paradigm, then the reason for the above behavior is pretty obvious - focusing your attention on a single child creates more emotional arousal than trying to distribute attention around eight children simultaneously. So people are willing to pay more to help one child than to help eight. Now, **you could** look at this intuition, and **think it was** revealing **some** kind of **incredibly deep moral truth** which shows that one child's good fortune is somehow devalued by the other children's good fortune. But what about the billions of other children in the world? Why isn't it a bad idea to help this one child, when that causes the value of all the other children to go down? How can it be significantly better to have 1,329,342,410 happy children than 1,329,342,409, but then somewhat worse to have seven more at 1,329,342,417? **Or you could** look at that and **say: "The intuition is wrong: the brain can't** successfully **multiply** by eight and get a larger quantity than it started with. **But it ought to**, normatively speaking." And once you realize that the brain can't multiply by eight, then the other cases of scope neglect stop seeming to reveal some fundamental truth about 50,000 lives being worth just the same effort as 5,000 lives, or whatever. You don't get the impression you're looking at the revelation of a deep moral truth about nonagglomerative utilities. It's just that the brain doesn't goddamn multiply. Quantities get thrown out the window. If you have $100 to spend, and you spend $20 each on each of 5 efforts to save 5,000 lives, you will do worse than if you spend $100 on a single effort to save 50,000 lives. Likewise if such choices are made by 10 different people, rather than the same person. As soon as you start believing that it is better to save 50,000 lives than 25,000 lives, that simple preference of final destinations has implications for the choice of paths, when you consider five different events that save 5,000 lives. (It is a general principle that Bayesians see no difference between the long-run answer and the short-run answer; you never get two different answers from computing the same question two different ways. But the long run is a helpful intuition pump, so I am talking about it anyway.) The aggregative valuation strategy of "shut up and multiply" arises from the simple preference to have more of something - to save as many lives as possible - when you have to describe general principles for choosing more than once, acting more than once, planning at more than one time. Aggregation also arises from claiming that the local choice to save one life doesn't depend on how many lives already exist, far away on the other side of the planet, or far away on the other side of the universe. Three lives are one and one and one. No matter how many billions are doing better, or doing worse. 3 = 1 + 1 + 1, no matter what other quantities you add to both sides of the equation. And if you add another life you get 4 = 1 + 1 + 1 + 1. That's aggregation. **When you've read enough** heuristics and **biases research, and enough coherence** and uniqueness **proofs for** Bayesian probabilities and **expected utility**, and you've seen the "Dutch book" and "money pump" effects that penalize trying to handle uncertain outcomes any other way, **then you don't see** the **preference reversals** in the Allais Paradox **as** revealing **some** incredibly **deep moral truth** about the intrinsic value of certainty. **It just goes to show that the brain doesn't** goddamn **multiply.** The primitive, perceptual intuitions that make a choice "feel good" don't handle probabilistic pathways through time very skillfully, especially when the probabilities have been expressed symbolically rather than experienced as a frequency. So you reflect, devise more trustworthy logics, and think it through in words. When you see people insisting that no amount of money whatsoever is worth a single human life, and then driving an extra mile to save $10; or when you see people insisting that no amount of money is worth a decrement of health, and then choosing the cheapest health insurance available; then you don't think that their protestations reveal some deep truth about incommensurable utilities. Part of it, clearly, is that **primitive intuitions don't successfully diminish the emotional impact of** symbols standing for **small quantities** - anything you talk about seems like "an amount worth considering". And part of it has to do with preferring unconditional social rules to conditional social rules. Conditional rules seem weaker, seem more subject to manipulation. If there's any loophole that lets the government legally commit torture, then the government will drive a truck through that loophole. So it seems like there should be an unconditional social injunction against preferring money to life, and no "but" following it. Not even "but a thousand dollars isn't worth a 0.0000000001% probability of saving a life". Though the latter choice, of course, is revealed every time we sneeze without calling a doctor. The rhetoric of sacredness gets bonus points for seeming to express an unlimited commitment, an unconditional refusal that signals trustworthiness and refusal to compromise. So you conclude that moral rhetoric espouses qualitative distinctions, because espousing a quantitative tradeoff would sound like you were plotting to defect. On such occasions, people vigorously want to throw quantities out the window, and they get upset if you try to bring quantities back in, because quantities sound like conditions that would weaken the rule. But you don't conclude that there are actually two tiers of utility with lexical ordering. You don't conclude that there is actually an infinitely sharp moral gradient, some atom that moves a Planck distance (in our continuous physical universe) and sends a utility from 0 to infinity. You don't conclude that utilities must be expressed using hyper-real numbers. Because the lower tier would simply vanish in any equation. It would never be worth the tiniest effort to recalculate for it. All decisions would be determined by the upper tier, and all thought spent thinking about the upper tier only, if the upper tier genuinely had lexical priority. As Peter Norvig once pointed out, if Asimov's robots had strict priority for the First Law of Robotics ("A robot shall not harm a human being, nor through inaction allow a human being to come to harm") then no robot's behavior would ever show any sign of the other two Laws; there would always be some tiny First Law factor that would be sufficient to determine the decision. Whatever value is worth thinking about at all, must be worth trading off against all other values worth thinking about, because thought itself is a limited resource that must be traded off. When you reveal a value, you reveal a utility. I don't say that morality should always be simple. I've already said that the meaning of music is more than happiness alone, more than just a pleasure center lighting up. I would rather see music composed by people than by nonsentient machine learning algorithms, so that someone should have the joy of composition; I care about the journey, as well as the destination. And I am ready to hear if you tell me that the value of music is deeper, and involves more complications, than I realize - that the valuation of this one event is more complex than I know. But that's for one event. When it comes to multiplying by quantities and probabilities, complication is to be avoided - at least if you care more about the destination than the journey. **When you've reflected** on enough intuitions, **and corrected enough absurdities, you** start to **see a common denominator, a meta-principle** at work, **which one might phrase as "Shut up and multiply."** Where music is concerned, I care about the journey. When lives are at stake, I shut up and multiply. It is more important that lives be saved, than that we conform to any particular ritual in saving them. And the optimal path to that destination is governed by laws that are simple, because they are math. **And that's why I'm a utilitarian** - at least when I am doing something that is overwhelmingly more important than my own feelings about it - which is most of the time, because there are not many utilitarians, and many things left undone.

Second, my standard controls the link to any practical reason or contract frameworks because rational agents would consent to a universal law to maximize utility to increase the chance of their own interests being satisfied.

Third, reductionism.

Brain studies prove personal identity doesn’t exist. **Parfit 84** writes[[13]](#footnote-13)

Some **recent medical cases provide striking evidence in favour of the Reductionist View.** Human beings have a **lower brain and** two **upper hemispheres**, which **are connected by a bundle of fibres.** In treating a few people with severe epilepsy, **surgeons have cut these fibres.** The aim was to reduce the severity of epileptic fits, by confining their causes to a single hemisphere. This aim was achieved. But the operations had another unintended consequence. **The effect**, in the words of one surgeon, **was the creation of ‘two separate spheres of consciousness.’ This effect was revealed by** various **psychological tests.** These made use of two facts. We control our right arms with our left hemispheres, and vice versa. And what is in the right halves of our visual fields we see with our left hemispheres, and vice versa. When someone’s hemispheres have been disconnected, **psychologists can thus present** to this person two different written **questions in the two halves of his visual field, and can receive two different answers** written by this person’s two hands.

In the absence of personal identity, only end states can matter. **Shoemaker 99**[[14]](#footnote-14)

Extreme reductionism might lend support to utilitarianism in the following way. Many people claim that we are justified in maximizing the good in our own lives, but not justified in maximizing the good across sets of lives, simply because each of us is a single, deeply unified person, unified by the further fact of identity, whereas there is no such corresponding unity across sets of lives. But if the only justification for the different treatment of individual lives and sets of lives is the further fact, and this fact is undermined by the truth of reductionism, then nothing justifies this different treatment. **There are no deeply unified subjects of experience. What remains are merely the experiences themselves, and so any ethical theory distinguishing between individual lives** and sets of lives **is mistaken.** If the deep, further fact is missing, then there are no unities. **The morally significant units should then be the states people are in at particular times, and an ethical theory that focused on them** and attempted to improve their quality, whatever their location, **would be the most plausible. Util**itarianism **is just such a theory.**

Fourth, util is epistemologically necessary. Everyone values happiness whether they want to or not. Even people who claim they’re skeptics wouldn’t shoot themselves in the foot.

And fifth, act-omission distinction doesn’t apply to states.

**Sunstein and Vermuele 05** write[[15]](#footnote-15)

The most fundamental point is that unlike individuals, **governments always** and necessarily **face a choice between** or among **possible policies for regulating third parties. The distinction between acts and omissions may not be intelligible in this context,** and even if it is, the distinction does not make a morally relevant difference. Most generally, government is in the business of creating permissions and prohibitions. When it explicitly or implicitly authorizes private action, it is not omitting to do anything or refusing to act. **Moreover, the distinction between authorized and unauthorized private action** – for example, private killing – **becomes obscure when government** formally **forbids private action but chooses a** set of **policy** instruments **that do[es] not** adequately or **fully discourage it.**

Infinite values don’t paralyze calculation. **Lauwers and Vallentyne 04** write[[16]](#footnote-16)

**Zero Independence holds that the ranking of two worlds is determined by** the pattern of **differences in local value. This**, we claim, **is highly plausible** in the context of finitely additive value theories. In the finite case, finitely additive value theories always satisfy Zero Independence. Although they typically get expressed as judging a world as at least as good as another (having the same locations) if and only if its total value is at least as great, the **reference to the total is not needed.** An equivalent statement is that one world as at least as good as the second if and only if the sum of the differences in value is at least as great as zero. **Only the pattern of differences matters**. **Even in the infinite case**, Zero Independence is “partially” implied by Sum and Loose Pareto. Sum ranks U as at least as good as V if and only if Sum ranks U-V as at least as good as its zero world. Moreover, if two worlds U and V satisfy the antecedent clause of Loose Pareto, then Loose Pareto ranks U as at least as good as V if and only if it ranks U-V above its zero world. Zero Independence is thus, we claim, highly plausible for finitely additive theories.

Zero Independence is equivalent to a condition in social choice theory known as Translation Scale Invariance when it is restricted to the case where locations are the same.[[17]](#footnote-17) This latter condition holds that interlocational comparisons of zero points are irrelevant to the ranking of worlds. The zero point for value at each location, that is, can be set independently of how it is set for other locations (although, of course, when comparing two worlds, the zero point used for a given location in one world must also be used for that location in the second world). For example, if a location has values of 10 in world U and 5 in world V, both measured on the basis of some particular zero point (the same for both worlds), those values could be changed to 7 and 2 (by making the zero point 3 units higher for that location), and this, according to Translation Scale Invariance, would not alter how the two worlds are ranked.

Zero Independence is equivalent to Translation Scale Invariance (restricted to the case where locations are the same), since any change in the zero points for the locations in worlds U and V can, for some W, be represented by U+W and V+W. (For example, if there are just two people, and the first person’s zero point is decreased by two units, and the second person’s zero point is increased by one unit, then the resulting two representations of the value of U and V are simply U+W and V+W, where W is <2,-1>.) Zero Independence and Translation Scale Invariance thus each hold that U ≥ V if and only if U+W ≥ V+W.

Translation Scale Invariance (and hence, Zero Independence) is highly plausible for finitely additive value theories. (Recall that our goal is to defend a particular extension of finite additivity, not to defend finite additivity against non-additive theories.) **If there is no natural zero point that separates positive from negative value** (if there is just more or less value with no natural separating point), **then any particular zero point is arbitrary** (not representing a real aspect of value). In this case, interlocational comparisons of zero-points are uncontroversially irrelevant. **If**, on the other hand, **there is a natural zero for value, it is still** plausible for finitely additive value theories to hold that it is **irrelevant** for ranking worlds. **What matters** (e.g., **from** a **util**itarian perspective), as argued above, **are** the **differences in value at each location between two worlds—not the absolute level of values** at locations. No interlocational comparison of zero points is needed for this purpose.

Cost-benefit analysis is feasible. Ignore any util calc indicts. **Hardin 90** writes[[18]](#footnote-18)

**One** of the **cute**r **charge**s **against util**itarianism **is that** it is irrational in the following sense. **If I take the time to calculate** the consequences of various courses of action before me, **then** I will ipso facto have chosen the course of action to take, namely, to sit and calculate, because while I am calculating the other **courses of action will cease to be open to me. It should embarrass philosophers that they have ever taken this** objection **seriously. Parallel considerations in other realms are dismissed** with eminently good sense. Lord Devlin notes, “If the reasonable man ‘worked to rule’ by perusing to the point of comprehension every form he was handed, the commercial and administrative life of the country would creep **to** a standstill.” James March and Herbert Simon **escape** the quandary of **unending calculation** by noting that often we satisfice, **we do not maximize: we stop calculating** and considering **when we find a merely adequate choice** of action. **When**, in principle, **one cannot know what is** the **best** choice, **one can nevertheless be sure that** sitting and **calculating is not the best choice.** But, one may ask, How do you know that another ten minutes of calculation would not have produced a better choice? And one can only answer, You do not. At some point the quarrel begins to sound adolescent. It is ironic that **the point** of the quarrel **is almost never at issue in practice** (as Devlin implies, **we are** almost all **too reasonable** in practice **to bring the world to a standstill**) but only in the principled discussions of academics.

Next is Theory Preempts

1. Gutcheck against dumb theory. Competing interps leads to a race to the bottom where every round comes down to theory, killing substantive education. Intervention is inevitable in blippy theory debates.

2. Prefer aff interpretations. Key to clash. **O’Donnell 4** writes[[19]](#footnote-19)

**AFC preserves the value of the first aff**irmative constructive **speech. This speech is the starting point for the debate.** It is a function of necessity. The debate must begin somewhere if it is to begin at all. **Failure to grant AFC** is a denial of the service rendered by the affirmative team’s labor when they crafted this speech. Further, if the affirmative does not get to pick the starting point, **[renders] the opening speech** act is essentially rendered **meaningless while the rest of the debate becomes a debate about what we should be debating about.**

3. Debating specific nuclear scenarios is key to stave off actual nuclear war.

**Harvard Nuclear Study Group 83** writes[[20]](#footnote-20)

The question is grisly, but nonetheless it must be asked. **Nuclear war cannot be avoided** simply **by refusing to think about it.** Indeed the task of **reducing** the likelihood of **nuclear war should begin with** an effort to **understand[ing] how it might start. When strategists in Washington** or Moscow **study** the possible origins of **nuclear war, they discuss “scenarios,”** imagined sequences of future events that could trigger the use of nuclear weaponry. Scenarios are, of course, speculative exercises. They often leave out the political developments that might lead to the use of force in order to focus on military dangers. That nuclear war scenarios are even more speculative than most is something for which we can be thankful, for it reflects humanity’s fortunate lack of experience with atomic warfare since 1945. But imaginary as they are, **nuclear scenarios can help identify problems not understood or dangers not yet** prevented because they have not been **foreseen.**

4. Err aff on theory because of time skew. This also means presume aff if presumption matters.

5. The aff doesn’t have to implement a specific policy. Decision rules like the PP are key to the most accurate interp for the topic.

**Nebel 14** writes[[21]](#footnote-21)

I hear that many affirmatives on this topic defend the implementation of a particular policy or set of policies in developing countries. The classic framing of this issue has been in terms of an Aims vs. Implementation dichotomy, which has carried over from the Jan/Feb 2013 topic about valuing rehabilitation above retribution. In this article, I’ll explain why I think that is a false dichotomy, and how you can strategically get past this framing of the issue. The most important word in the resolution, for the purposes of this disagreement, is ‘prioritize.’ This is because a topical affirmative advocacy has to do the thing that the resolution says ought to be done. In this case, that’s prioritization. Now, if you just stop there, you might have the following thought: if a topical advocacy just needs to prioritize environmental protection (EP) over resource extraction (RE), then implementing some particular policy that prioritizes EP over RE is, ceteris paribus, topical. But that’s not a good inference. The reason is that what has to do the prioritizing in order to be topical is the agent. Your advocacy must be that the agent prioritize EP over RE, whatever that means. In this case, that agent is ‘developing countries.’ **Just because an agent implements some policy** or set of policies that prioritize EP over RE **does not mean that the agent** itself **prioritizes EP over RE**. This may seem like a picky distinction, but consider some examples. **Suppose I chose to spend time with my friends tonight, rather than work on a paper**. This choice might prioritize friendship over work. But this choice does not make it the case that I prioritize friendship over work. **I might actually** be the kind of person who **prioritize**s **work over friendship, so that I almost always choose to write a paper** when I could instead hang out with friends**, but this** night **is the rare opportunity when I hang out with my friends**. So, just because some choice or action prioritizes one thing over another does not entail that the agent prioritizes one thing over another. If we assume that an advocacy is topical only if it makes it the case that the agent does what the resolution says it ought to do, then this means that implementing a particular policy that prioritizes EP over RE is not enough to be topical. (That is, absent evidence about this policy having the effect of changing developing countries’ priorities as a whole. But then this advocacy might only be effects-topical.) People might respond with a definition of EP or RE in terms of policies. This definition might show that the objects to be prioritized are sets of policies, or some common feature of policies, rather than an abstract aim. But the relevant question is not Aims vs. Implementation: that framing of the topic only persists because of Jan/Feb 2013, on which people defined 'rehabilitation' and 'retribution' as either an aim or a kind of policy. But Aims vs. Implementation is not the correct contrast. The correct contrasts are Aims vs. Policies, and Prioritization vs. Implementation. The point is that prioritizing some kind of policy is not the same as implementing some policy from that set. Aims vs. Policies is a matter of the direct object, whereas Prioritization vs. Implementation is a matter of the verb. **We can agree that EP and RE are sets** or kinds **of policies, but** think **that the resolution is about which we ought to prioritize, not** which we ought to **implement**. However, this does not mean that the anti-policy side completely wins. People who wish to defend an anti-policy interpretation often make their interpretations too strong, by **suggesting** that **no questions of implementation are relevant**. That **seems** to me **false**. To see why, consider a variation on my earlier example about hanging out with my friends or writing a paper. Suppose I used to prioritize work over friendship, but I now prioritize friendship over work. It seems that I am now more likely to spend time with my friends, when this trades off with writing a paper, than I used to be. This is because **an agent’s priorities shape her decisions**. They don’t guarantee that an agent will always choose any particular action that better reflects those priorities. But they will lead to different patterns of actions on the whole. If this is right, then **the most accurate Aims-based interp**retation of the topic **allows that the aff**irmative **advocacy leads to** the **implementation of policies that prioritize EP over RE as an effect**, although the affirmative can’t advocate any particular policy. Implementation of particular policies is an effect, which can be used to garner advantages or disadvantages, but cannot be the affirmative advocacy. And any particular effect of that kind can only be known with some uncertain probability; it cannot be assumed to occur as a matter of fiat.

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